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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

RIGHTS OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL OR ETHNIC RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Letter dated 26 April 1995 from the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I am honoured to transmit herewith* the statement of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia concerning the continued forcible seizure of the land owned by the people of Serbian and Montenegrin minorities in Albania, and to request you kindly to transmit it to the distinguished members of the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed) Dr. Vladimir Pavicevic
Ambassador

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* The annex is being reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

ANNEX

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
19 April 1995

STATEMENT

The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs has received with indignation the information that on 10 and 11 April 1995 Albanian authorities continued to forcibly seize the land owned by the people of Serbian and Montenegrin minorities, the so-called Vračani and Podgoričani, from the villages of Stari and Mladi Borić, where they have lived for centuries. Particularly alarming is the fact that the Albanian police violently used force, arrested 15 members of Serbian and Montenegrin minorities and brought them to the Skadar police station where they were exposed to brutal physical and mental maltreatment and torture. There were women among the victims, but the hospital in Skadar refused to examine them and issue a medical report on their injuries. All this is a drastic example of a mass violation of basic human, civil and minority rights.

The land forcibly seized from their legal Serb and Montenegrin owners, is given by the Albanian authorities to Malisori Albanians from the village of Stara Stoja, who have settled this area recently leaving their old settlements in the mountains. The official explanation of the Albanian authorities that this is done due to administrative reorganization, and that Serbs and Montenegrins will be given other land, is totally unacceptable and quite cynical. This act of the Albanian authorities is a function of the well known policy of the forcible change of the national composition and of the breaking up homogenous ethnic settlements of the Serbian and Montenegrin population of Vraka, i.e.in the belt along the Yugoslav-Albanian border.

The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to remind with concern that on 6 and 8 June 1994 the Albanian authorities also tried to seize forcibly about 60 ha of the most fertile land and to expel the members of Serbian and Montenegrin minorities from the same villages in this area. They have received no reply yet to their written complaints addressed to the president of the Republic, Prime Minister and the President of the Parliament of Albania several months ago, which is yet another example of arbitrariness and illegitimacy.

The latest events prove that the official Albanian authorities continue the policy of national discrimination, the policy of systematic pressure, threats and intimidation against the members of Yugoslav minorities aimed at their forcible resettlement and assimilation.

The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses its great concern over, and condemnation of, such policy of Albania whereby it grossly violates the fundamental principles of the Untied Nations Charter and the OSCE, as well as the basic human rights - the right to freedom, residence and to private property - which is in flagrant contradiction with its declarative advocacy of respect for human rights and the development of democracy. The minority policy of Albania pursued vis-a-vis Serbs, Montenegrins and Goranci is based on a complete denial of their national, human and civil rights. There is an evident discrepancy between the Albanian policy of the incitement of the separatism of the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija on one hand, and Albania's denial of all rights to Yugoslav minorities in Albania, on the other.

The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs has noted with regret that international human and minority rights organizations and institutions, such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, OSCE, Council of Europe and other fora and non-governmental organizations have tolerated Albania's policy in this field. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expects all international factors to accord the most serious attention to the issue of the position of the members of Yugoslav minorities in Albania and to call on Albania to respect the principles which it supports in words and which are binding on it by virtue of its membership in international organizations.

The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls on the Albanian authorities to ensure normal conditions of life to the members of Serbian, Montenegrin and other Slav minorities and to revoke its decision on forcible seizures of land and the resettlement of Vračani and Podgoričani. The FR of Yugoslavia, which guarantees to Albanian and other minorities, all rights under the highest international standards, will continue to make resolute efforts towards respecting the human and national rights of Serbian and Montenegrin minorities and Goranci in Albania.